

REMARKS

In the Official Action, the Examiner raised a rejection under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112 due to the presence of the term "essentially comprises" and set forth a variety of prior art rejections. The Examiner only objected to dependent claim 14 and indicated that such claim (which depended from claim 13 which depended in turn from independent claim 8) would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

By the present Amendment, the phrase which includes the term "essentially comprises" has been deleted from claim 1 thereby meeting the §112 rejection and the subject matter of claims 13 and 14 has been incorporated into independent claim 8. The subject matter of claims 13 and 14 was identical to the subject matter of claims 6 and 7 and such subject matter has also been incorporated into independent claim 1 with claims 6, 7, 13 and 14 being accordingly canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. In addition, the "proviso" language from claim 8 relating to the phosphorus atom-containing compound has been incorporated into claim 1 so that the two independent claims are similar (but not identical as claim 8 relates to a positive working layer). Thus, based on the Examiner's indication of allowability of claim 14 in the Official Action and in light of the current amendments to the claims consistent therewith, applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 1 and 8 and the remaining claims dependent thereon are patentable in all respects.

The present Amendment also adds new claims 15-19. New independent claim 15 is identical to independent claim 1, but defines the intermediate layer as being comprised of polymer compound comprising acid group consistent with the description provide on page 23, lines 14-16 and polymer no. 29 on page 36. Such an intermediate layer is not taught

by the prior art of record, such as Tomita et al., United States Patent No. 5,110,710, which describes a primer layer in passage beginning at column 4, line 42, but not one which is comprised of a polymer compound as defined in any of claims of record including new claims 15-19 (wherein dependent claims 16-19 mirror original claims 2-5). Therefore, applicants respectfully maintain that these claims are also patentable in all respects.

For all the foregoing reasons, applicants have provided claim amendments in accordance with the guidance provided in the Official Action to place the claims in allowable form. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner wish to discuss any aspect of the present application, she is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: Robert G. Mukai
Robert G. Mukai
Registration No. 28,531

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620

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